

Bay Area's Busy Oliver Jackson

GALLERIES

Kenneth Baker

The Ianetti Lanzone Gallery, 310 Grant Avenue, bills its current show as a 10-year survey of painting, sculpture and works on paper by Bay Area artist Oliver Jackson (through May 7). The show is not as comprehensive as "survey" implies, but the work in it is impressively substantial and diverse.

The improvised character of Jackson's technique and his fondness for shrill, straight-from-the-tube color give vitality to nearly everything he paints. He is completely at ease working a big surface, whether he covers every inch of it or leaves great swathes unpainted. His feel for compositional weights and measures is almost unfailing.

In his paintings and drawings alike, Jackson whips up whirlwinds of marks from which sketchy human figures emerge and subside. Far from being burdened with symbolism, Jackson's figures — at least in the paintings — seem like progeny of his working process and the training behind it.

Jackson is almost as comfortable in sculpture as in painting, especially when he carves in marble. Playing highly worked areas against rough-hewn stone, he translates into sculpture the same vision of human figures alternately bound by matter and borne by it. As convincing as the sculpture here is, nothing in this show quite compares with the beautiful sarcophagus-like marble Jackson has in the "Bay Area Sculpture" show at the Palo Alto Cultural Center.



Oliver Jackson's *untitled* 96-inch square oil on linen (1986), on display at the Ianetti Lanzone Gallery

San Francisco Chronicle, April 23, 1988, p. C7.